

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
HOUSTON DIVISION**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

v.

**MIKE SULTAN, A.K.A.,
MEDHI SOLTAN MOHAMMADI**

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CRIMINAL NO. 15-094

PLEA AGREEMENT

The United States of America, by and through Kenneth Magidson, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Texas, and Carolyn Ferko, Assistant United States Attorney, and Defendant, Mike Sultan, a.k.a. Medhi Soltan Mohammadi (“Sultan”), and Defendant’s counsel, pursuant to Rule 11(c)(1)(A) and Rule 11(c)(1)(B) of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure, state that they have entered into an agreement, the terms and conditions of which are as follows:

The Defendant’s Agreement

1. Defendant agrees to plead guilty to Count One of the Indictment. Count One charges Defendant with false statements to U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1001(a)(2). Defendant, by entering this plea, agrees that he is waiving any right to have the facts that the law makes essential to the punishment either charged in the Indictment or proven to a jury or judge beyond a reasonable doubt.

Punishment Range

2. The statutory maximum penalty for each violation of Title 18, United States Code, § 1001(a)(2), is a term of imprisonment of not more than five (5) years and a fine of not

more than \$250,000. Additionally, Defendant may receive a term of supervised release after imprisonment of not more than three (3) years. Title 18, United States Code, §§ 3559(a) and 3583(b). Defendant acknowledges and understands that if he should violate the conditions of any period of supervised release which may be imposed as part of his sentence, then Defendant may be imprisoned for the entire term of supervised release, without credit for time already served on the term of supervised release prior to such violation. *See* Title 18, United States Code, §§ 3559(a) and 3583(e)(3). Defendant understands that he cannot have the imposition or execution of the sentence suspended, nor is he eligible for parole.

Mandatory Special Assessment

3. Pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, § 3013(a)(2)(A), immediately after sentencing, Defendant will pay to the Clerk of the United States District Court a special assessment in the amount of one hundred dollars (\$100.00) per count of conviction. The payment will be by cashier's check or money order payable to the Clerk of the United States District Court, c/o District Clerk's Office, P.O. Box 61010, Houston, Texas 77208, Attention: Finance.

Immigration Consequences

4. Defendant recognizes that pleading guilty may have consequences with respect to his immigration status if he is not a citizen of the United States. Defendant understands that if he is not a citizen of the United States, by pleading guilty he may be removed from the United States, denied citizenship, and denied admission to the United States in the future. Defendant's attorney has advised Defendant of the potential immigration consequences resulting from Defendant's plea of guilty.

Cooperation

5. The parties understand this Agreement carries the potential for a motion for departure under § 5K1.1 of the United States Sentencing Guidelines. Defendant understands and agrees that whether such a motion is filed will be determined solely by the United States through the United States Attorney for the Southern District of Texas. Should Defendant's cooperation, in the sole judgment and discretion of the United States, amount to "substantial assistance," the United States reserves the sole right to file a motion for departure pursuant to § 5K1.1 of the Sentencing Guidelines. Defendant further agrees to persist in that plea through sentencing, fully cooperate with the United States, and not oppose the forfeiture of assets contemplated in paragraph twenty-two (22), twenty-three (23), and twenty-four (24) of this agreement.

6. Defendant understands and agrees that the usage "fully cooperate," as used herein, includes providing all information relating to any criminal activity known to Defendant, including, but not limited to, any and all federal criminal violations under Title 18, Title 22 and Title 31. Defendant understands that such information includes both state and federal offenses arising therefrom. In that regard:

- (a) Defendant agrees that this Plea Agreement binds only the United States Attorney for the Southern District of Texas and Defendant, and that it does not bind any other United States Attorney or other component or unit of the Department of Justice;
- (b) Defendant agrees to testify truthfully as a witness before a grand jury or in any other judicial or administrative proceeding when called upon to do so by the United States. Defendant further agrees to waive his Fifth Amendment privilege against self-incrimination for the purpose of this Agreement;
- (c) Defendant agrees to voluntarily attend any interviews and conferences as the United States may request;
- (d) Defendant agrees to provide truthful, complete, and accurate information and testimony and understands any false statements made by Defendant to the grand jury or at any court proceeding (criminal or civil), or to a government agent

or attorney, can and will be prosecuted under the appropriate perjury, false statement, or obstruction statutes;

(e) Defendant agrees to provide to the United States all documents in his possession or under his control relating to all areas of inquiry and investigation.

(f) Should the recommended departure, if any, not meet Defendant's expectations, Defendant understands he remains bound by the terms of this Agreement and that he cannot, for that reason alone, withdraw his plea.

Waiver of Appeal

7. Defendant is aware that Title 28, United States Code, § 1291, and Title 18, United States Code, § 3742, afford a defendant the right to appeal the conviction and sentence imposed. Defendant knowingly and voluntarily waives the right to appeal the conviction and the sentence imposed, or the manner in which the sentence was determined. Additionally, Defendant is aware that Title 28, United States Code, § 2255, affords the right to contest or "collaterally attack" a conviction or sentence after the conviction or sentence has become final. Defendant knowingly and voluntarily waives the right to contest his conviction or sentence, except that Defendant does not waive the right to raise a claim of ineffective assistance of counsel on direct appeal, if otherwise permitted, or on collateral review in a motion under Title 28, United States Code, section 2255. In the event Defendant files a notice of appeal following the imposition of the sentence or later collaterally attacks his conviction or sentence, the United States will assert its rights under this agreement and seek specific performance of these waivers.

8. In agreeing to these waivers, Defendant is aware that a sentence has not yet been determined by the Court. Defendant is also aware that any estimate of the possible sentencing range under the Sentencing Guidelines that he may have received from his counsel, the United States, or the Probation Office, is a prediction, not a promise, and such estimate did not induce his guilty plea and is binding on neither the United States, the Probation Office, nor the Court.

The United States does not make any promise or representation concerning what sentence Defendant will receive. Defendant further understands and agrees that the Sentencing Guidelines are “effectively advisory” to the Court. *See United States v. Booker*, 125 S.Ct. 738 (2005). Accordingly, Defendant understands that, although the Court must consult the Sentencing Guidelines and must take them into account when sentencing Defendant, the Court is not bound to follow the Sentencing Guidelines nor sentence Defendant within the calculated guideline range.

9. Defendant understands and agrees that each and all waivers contained in the Agreement are made in exchange for the concessions made by the United States in this Plea Agreement.

The United States' Agreements

10. The United States agrees to each of the following:

(a) If Defendant pleads guilty to Count One of the Indictment and persists in that plea through sentencing, and if the Court accepts this Plea Agreement, the United States will move to dismiss any remaining counts of the Indictment at the time of sentencing;

(b) At the time of sentencing, the United States agrees not to oppose Defendant's anticipated request to the Court and the United States Probation Office that he receive a two (2)- level downward adjustment under § 3E1.1(a) of the Sentencing Guidelines should Defendant accept responsibility as contemplated by the Sentencing Guidelines (U.S.S.G.); and

(c) If Defendant qualifies for an adjustment under U.S.S.G. § 3E1.1(a) and Defendant's offense level is 16 or greater, the United States may move for an additional one (1)-level downward adjustment based on the timeliness of the plea or the expeditious manner in which Defendant provided complete information regarding his role in the offense.

Agreement Binding - Southern District of Texas Only

11. The United States agrees that it will not further criminally prosecute Defendant in

the Southern District of Texas for offenses arising from conduct charged in the Indictment. This Plea Agreement binds only the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Texas and Defendant. It does not bind any other United States Attorney. The United States will bring this Plea Agreement and the full extent of Defendant's cooperation to the attention of other prosecuting offices if requested.

United States' Non-Waiver of Appeal

12. The United States reserves the right to carry out its responsibilities under the Sentencing Guidelines. Specifically, the United States reserves the right:

- (a) to bring its version of the facts of this case, including its evidence file and any investigative files, to the attention of the Probation Office in connection with that office's preparation of a presentence report;
- (b) to set forth or dispute sentencing factors or facts material to sentencing;
- (c) to seek resolution of such factors or facts in conference with Defendant's counsel and the Probation Office;
- (d) to file a pleading relating to these issues, in accordance with U.S.S.G. § 6A1.2 and Title 18, United States Code, § 3553(a); and
- (e) to appeal the sentence imposed or the manner in which it was determined.

Sentence Determination

13. Defendant is aware that the sentence will be imposed after consideration of the Sentencing Guidelines, which are only advisory, as well as the provisions of Title 18, United States Code, § 3553(a). Defendant nonetheless acknowledges and agrees that the Court has authority to impose any sentence up to and including the statutory maximum set for the offense(s) to which Defendant pleads guilty, and that the sentence to be imposed is within the sole discretion of the sentencing judge after the Court has consulted the applicable Sentencing Guidelines. Defendant understands and agrees the parties' positions regarding the application of

the Sentencing Guidelines do not bind the Court, and that the sentence imposed is within the discretion of the sentencing judge. If the Court should impose any sentence up to the maximum established by statute, or should the Court order any or all of the sentences imposed to run consecutively, Defendant cannot, for that reason alone, withdraw a guilty plea, and will remain bound to fulfill all of the obligations under this Plea Agreement.

Rights at Trial

14. Defendant represents to the Court that he is satisfied that his attorney has rendered effective assistance. Defendant understands that by entering into this Agreement, he surrenders certain rights as provided in this Plea Agreement. Defendant understands that those rights include the following:

- (a) If the Defendant persisted in a plea of not guilty to the charges, Defendant would have the right to a speedy jury trial with the assistance of counsel. The trial may be conducted by a judge sitting without a jury if Defendant, the United States, and the court all agree.
- (b) At a trial, the United States would be required to present witnesses and other evidence against Defendant. Defendant would have the opportunity to confront those witnesses and his attorney would be allowed to cross-examine them. In turn, Defendant could, but would not be required to, present witnesses and other evidence on his own behalf. If the witnesses for Defendant would not appear voluntarily, he could require their attendance through the subpoena power of the court.
- (c) At a trial, Defendant could rely on a privilege against self-incrimination and decline to testify, and no inference of guilt could be drawn from such refusal to testify. However, if Defendant desired to do so, he could testify on his own behalf.

Factual Basis for Guilty Plea

15. Defendant is pleading guilty because he is guilty of the charges contained in Count One of the Indictment. If this case were to proceed to trial, the United States could prove each element of the offense beyond a reasonable doubt. The following facts, among others

would be offered to establish Defendant's guilt:

On or about February 5, 2015, Mike Sultan, a.k.a. Mehdi Soltan Mohammadi, ("Sultan"), a naturalized U.S. citizen, born in Iran was en route to Iran for four weeks via Turkish Airlines. Sultan was selected for an enforcement exam based upon an alert by K-9 Shyla.

On or about February 5, 2015, in the Southern District of Texas, law enforcement officers working with the Department of Homeland Security interviewed Sultan, as part of an investigation within the jurisdiction of the executive branch of the United States.

A U.S. Customs and Border Protection Officer ("CBPO") inquired whether Sultan was transporting more than \$10,000 dollars in U.S. currency or any other monetary instruments for himself or for anyone else. Sultan stated he was traveling with \$20,000 in U.S. currency. Sultan signed a FinCEN Form 105, where he declared the amount \$20,000 and signed his name. Sultan was referred to the secondary table for currency verification. Sultan produced two white envelopes from his fanny pack, which contained a total of \$20,000. During an examination of the fanny pack by CBPO, two additional white envelopes were found and contained an additional \$12,000. An additional \$1,017 was found in Sultan's wallet.

In truth, the defendant, Sultan, had NOT declared all of the U.S. currency he was carrying, which was in excess of \$33,000, which was a material fact and mislead law enforcement officers in a Federal investigation.

The false statement provided by the defendant did not result in a monetary loss to the United States or to a citizen of the United States.

Breach of Plea Agreement

16. If Defendant should fail in any way to fulfill completely all of the obligations under this Plea Agreement, the United States will be released from its obligations under the Plea Agreement, and Defendant's plea and sentence will stand. If at any time Defendant retains, conceals or disposes of assets in violation of this Plea Agreement, or if Defendant knowingly withholds evidence or is otherwise not completely truthful with the United States, then the United States may move the Court to set aside the guilty plea and reinstate prosecution. Any information and documents that have been disclosed by Defendant, whether prior to or subsequent to this Plea Agreement, and all leads derived therefrom, will be used against

Defendant in any prosecution.

Restitution, Forfeiture, and Fines

17. This Plea Agreement is being entered into by the United States on the basis of Defendant's express representation that he will make a full and complete disclosure of all assets over which he exercises direct or indirect control, or in which he has any financial interest. Defendant agrees not to dispose of any assets or take any action that would affect a transfer of property in which he has an interest, unless Defendant obtains the prior written permission of the United States.

18. Defendant agrees to make complete financial disclosure by truthfully executing a sworn financial statement (Form OBD-500) by the deadline set by the United States, or if no deadline is set, prior to sentencing. Defendant agrees to authorize the release of all financial information requested by the United States, including, but not limited to, executing authorization forms permitting the United States to obtain tax information, bank account records, credit histories, and social security information. Defendant agrees to discuss and answer any questions by the United States relating to Defendant's complete financial disclosure.

19. Defendant agrees to take all steps necessary to pass clear title to forfeitable assets to the United States and to assist fully in the collection of restitution and fines, including, but not limited to, surrendering title, executing a warranty deed, signing a consent decree, stipulating to facts regarding the transfer of title and the basis for the forfeiture, and signing any other documents necessary to effectuate such transfer. Defendant also agrees to direct any banks which have custody of his assets to deliver all funds and records of such assets to the United States.

20. Defendant understands that forfeiture, restitution, and fines are separate

components of sentencing and are separate obligations.

Restitution

21. If restitution is an issue, Defendant understands and agrees that the Court will determine the amount of restitution to fully compensate the victim. Defendant agrees that restitution imposed by the Court will be due and payable immediately and that Defendant will not attempt to avoid or delay payment. Defendant waives the right to challenge in any manner, including by direct appeal or in a collateral proceeding, the restitution order imposed by the Court.

Forfeiture

22. Defendant waives any claim to \$13,016.00 of the \$33,016.00 that was seized from him on February 5, 2015 after he failed to declare the full amount of currency that he was transporting (as discussed above in the factual basis), and he consents to the administrative forfeiture of \$13,016.00 by Customs and Border Protection. Defendant admits that this money is subject to forfeiture pursuant to 31 U.S.C. § 5317(c) because it was involved in a violation of 31 U.S.C. § 5316(a). The United States agrees to release \$20,000 of the \$33,016.00 to Defendant, subject to and less any outstanding fine and special assessment imposed by the Court as well as any other outstanding obligation owed to the United States or a state government (including past-due child support) which may, pursuant to federal law, be offset against the payment through the Treasury Offset Program.

23. Defendant waives all right, title and interest he has in, and any claim to, all firearm parts, ammunition and gun powder seized from him in February or March 2015, including but not limited to the following items (the "Seized Firearm Parts and Ammunition"): Timney trigger (FD Mosin Nagant #307), Timney trigger (Sportman Trigger for '98 Mauser SP

M98), gun powder, Remington buckshot shells, Sierra 30 caliber .308 DIA 150 gr. Spitzer boat tail 2125 bullets, Sierra 270 caliber .77 DIA 130 gr. Spitzer boat tail 1820 bullets, CCI large rifle primers, Remington rifle primers, two Redfield rifle scopes (3X-9X), Redfield rifle scope (4X-12X), McGowen precision barrels (.308 WIN), McGowen precision barrels (.270 WIN), Remington Arms Company, Inc. barrel (30-06 sprg), rifle barrel with no markings, double barrel for shotgun (serial number 21198), lower receiver (dual triggers, 5481), and black pistol grip (M4 rifle style application). Defendant consents to the administrative forfeiture of all of the Seized Firearm Parts and Ammunition that are subject to forfeiture, and he otherwise voluntarily abandons all right, title and interest in all of the other Seized Firearm Parts and Ammunition and consents to their destruction.

24. Defendant agrees to waive any and all interest in any asset which is the subject of a related administrative or judicial forfeiture proceeding, whether criminal or civil, federal or state.

Fines

25. Defendant understands that under the Sentencing Guidelines the Court is permitted to order Defendant to pay a fine that is sufficient to reimburse the government for the costs of any imprisonment or term of supervised release, if any. Defendant agrees that any fine imposed by the Court will be due and payable immediately, and Defendant will not attempt to avoid or delay payment. Subject to the provisions of paragraph 7 above, Defendant waives the right to challenge the fine in any manner, including by direct appeal or in a collateral proceeding.

Complete Agreement

26. This written Plea Agreement, consisting of thirteen (13) pages, including the attached addendum of Defendant and his attorney, constitutes the complete Plea Agreement

between the United States, Defendant, and his counsel. No promises or representations have been made by the United States except as set forth in writing in this Plea Agreement. Defendant acknowledges that no threats have been made against him and that he is pleading guilty freely and voluntarily because he is guilty.

27. The defendant further agrees that with respect to any and all dismissed charges he is not a "prevailing party" within the meaning of the "Hyde Amendment," Section 617, P.L. 105-119 (Nov. 26, 1997), and will not file any claim under that law.

28. Any modification of this Plea Agreement must be in writing and signed by all parties.

Filed at June 24, Texas, on June, 2015.



MIKE SULTAN
Defendant

Subscribed and sworn to before me on June 24, 2015.

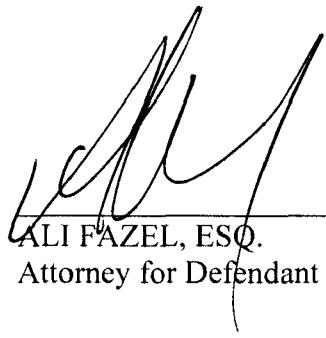
DAVID J. BRADLEY, Clerk
UNITED STATES DISTRICT CLERK

By: Karen M. Gruender
Deputy United States District Clerk

APPROVED:

Kenneth Magidson
United States Attorney

By: CAROLYN FERKO
CAROLYN FERKO
Assistant United States Attorney
Southern District of Texas
Telephone: (713) 567-9562



ALI FAZEL, ESQ.
Attorney for Defendant

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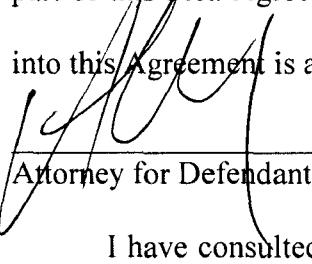
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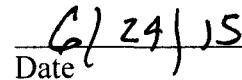
CRIMINAL NO. 15-094

PLEA AGREEMENT - ADDENDUM

I have fully explained to Defendant his rights with respect to the pending Information. I have reviewed the provisions of the United States Sentencing Commission's Guidelines Manual and Policy Statements and I have fully and carefully explained to Defendant the provisions of those Guidelines which may apply in this case. I have also explained to Defendant that the Sentencing Guidelines are only advisory and the court may sentence Defendant up to the maximum allowed by statute per count of conviction. Further, I have carefully reviewed every part of this Plea Agreement with Defendant. To my knowledge, Defendant's decision to enter into this Agreement is an informed and voluntary one.

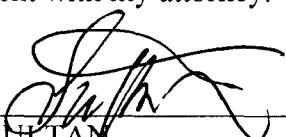


Attorney for Defendant

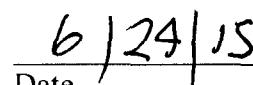


Date

I have consulted with my attorney and fully understand all my rights with respect to the Information pending against me. My attorney has fully explained and I understand all my rights with respect to the provisions of the United States Sentencing Commission's Guidelines Manual which may apply in my case. I have read and carefully reviewed every part of this Plea Agreement with my attorney. I understand this Agreement and I voluntarily agree to its terms.



MIKE SULTAN
Defendant



Date